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backs magnificent candelabra, and attended by beautiful youths. In the sixth are figures bearing vases, and others displaying the arms of the vanquished. The seventh picture shows us the unhappy captives, who, according to the barbarous Roman custom, were exhibited on these occasions to the scoffing and exulting populace. There is here a group of female captives of all ages, among them a young, dejected, bride-like figure, a woman carrying her infant children, and a mother leading by the hand her little boy, who lifts up his foot as if he had hurt it; this group is particularly pointed out by Vasari, who praises it for its nature and its grace. In the eighth picture, we have a group of singers and musicians, and among them is seen a youth whose unworthy office it was to mock at the wretched captives, in which he is assisted by a chorus of the common people; a beautiful youth with a tambourine is distinguished by singular spirit and grace. In the last picture appears the conqueror, Julius Cæsar, in a sumptuous chariot, richly adorned with sculptures in the antique style. He is surrounded and followed by a crowd of figures, and among them is seen a youth bearing aloft a standard, on which is inscribed Cæsar's memorable words, *Veni, Vidi, Vici*—"I came, I saw, I conquered."

The inconceivable richness of fancy displayed in this triumphal procession, the numbers of figures and objects of every kind, the propriety of the antique costumes, ornaments, armor, &c., with the scientific manner in which the perspective is managed, the whole being adapted to its intended situation far above the eye, so that the under surfaces of the objects are alone visible (as would be the case when viewed from below), the upper surfaces vanishing into air; all these merits combined render this series of pictures one of the grandest works of the fifteenth century, worthy of the attention and admiration of all beholders.\*

\* In the British Museum there is a fine set of the woodcuts in chiaro-scuro, executed by Andrea Andreani, about 1599, when the original frieze still kept its place in the alcove at Mantua.

(To be continued.)

[From the North American Review.]

## PHILOSOPHY OF THE FINE ARTS.

BY ERNEST VON LASAULX,

Only a few nations, comparatively, have reached the height of dramatic poetry. The Hebrews never rose above the lyric, and the Scandinavians attained only a crude epic. Greek poetry was the first that passed through a complete cycle of development, reaching its zenith in the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. English poetry culminated during the sixteenth century in Shakespeare; French, during the seventeenth, in Corneille, Racine, and Molière; German, during the eighteenth, in Goethe and Schiller. In Æschylus we find frequent traces of epic and lyric element which disappear in Sophocles and Euripides; and this is true also of the older English dramatists, as compared with the "Swan of Avon." Likewise in mediæval literature we observe the same chronological order. First, the priestly poetry, of which Muspilli, Krist, and Heland are specimens; secondly, the epopee or heroic poem represented by the Nibelungen and Kudrun; then the lyric of Troubadours and Minnesingers; and lastly, sacred and profane drama in the Mystery and Miracle-Plays. As song

forms the transition from music to poetry, so the drama is the connecting link between poetry and prose. In it rhyme ceases to be an ornament, and becomes an excrescence and a hindrance; and the only species of verse at all suitable to it is the Iambic measure, which approximates very closely to prose. Indeed, modern dramatic poetry shows a constantly increasing tendency to rid itself of all metrical restraints and employ the freer vehicle of artistic prose. A versified tragedy degenerates almost inevitably into declamation and rhetoric, a fate from which even the genius of Schiller has failed to save it.

The youngest and the most spiritual of the arts is prose. Its instrument is speech, like that of poetry; but it is speech emancipated from the limitations of metre, alliteration, and rhyme,—speech set free, *oratio soluta*; consequently it has fewer technical difficulties to overcome, and expresses itself more clearly and directly. The Muse of poesy is not the less fettered, because with truly feminine taste and tact she makes an ornament of her thralldom, and weaves her chains into garlands. Besides, the source of prose is not the imagination alone, nor any other isolated faculty; it is an outflow of the whole mind, and its domain is coextensive with the combined powers of the soul. It is as much above poetry as character is superior to faculty, or a full symmetrical man to a single fine feature. With a less complex mechanism it can do more, and is an organ of higher revelation. The essential nature of poetry is plastic; the spirit of prose is picturesque. The former is allied to sculpture, as the latter is to painting, or as music to architecture. The higher and more spiritual an art is, and the finer the material which it employs, the more intimately it is connected with the personality of the artist. The architect projects the plan; others erect the building. The sculptor moulds the clay in the form of the statue, and is thus brought into closer relations to his creation; but it is the stone-cutter who puts it in marble, and the founder who pours it in bronze. The painter, however, not only sketches the cartoon, but with his own hand limns the picture. So in music, the lowest of the speaking arts, the composer who creates the work commits it to the musician for execution, and it has no real existence until the latter embodies it in sound; and it seems to us that prose, as compared with poetry, bears the seal of the author's individuality more clearly impressed upon it, inasmuch as the poet is obliged to fit his conception to a Procrustean form from which he has only a very limited power to modify; his thought is forced into an artificial channel, while that of the prose-writer flows with the wider freedom of a river wearing its own bed and heaping up its own shores. In poetry, too, there is a lingering vestige of music; its full effect depends as much on the tone, color, weight, and temperature of the words and letters, as on their meaning. The versification of Coleridge's Christabel, or of Milton's Allegro and Penseroso, is inseparable from the very sentiment of those poems; and Shakespeare's Tempest is a symphony with passages as beautifully modulated as any in Beethoven; indeed, the whole play, like Caliban's enchanted island, is

"full of noises,  
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not."

In prose those purely *sensuous* qualities of language are less prominent; the word is valued more for its signification, and not so much for its sound. Chronologically, also, it is a later development than poetry, and presupposes a greater maturity of the

general mind. From the epos sprang romance and history; from the lyric, theology and philosophy; and from the drama, oratory. Thus in Grecian literature we can trace this continuity of growth, and find that Homer and Thucydides, Pindar and Plato, Sophocles and Demosthenes, are connected by a link as logical as that which binds conclusion to premise in the clamps of a syllogism. It is only a progress from individualization to generalization; from the concrete to the abstract, corresponding to the growth of the intellect in men and nations.

As the most romantic landscapes lie where craggy mountains and fertile lowlands meet, so the most poetical periods in history are where a rude and dark age just begins to brighten with the soft tints of a dawning civilization; but with the increasing light of culture is ushered in the era of prose, which, like an invading monarch, first takes possession of the valleys and the plains as a legitimate domain, and then pushes her conquests into the highlands, whose native queen, Poesia, retires farther and farther into her constantly diminishing realm, until at length nothing remains obedient to her sceptre but the solitude of a Parnassian peak. In literature, the ascendancy of prose is always in direct ratio to the general advance of the human spirit, and the clearing up of the intelligence. As a vehicle for the movement of ideas, it is far more adequate than poetry, and is therefore a better exponent of modern civilization. Substantially, the barriers between these two arts are already broken down, so that the terms poetry and prose no longer represent distinct circles of thought and emotion; they also become assimilated in *form* and *grammar* in proportion as the sensuous life of language dies out, and the spiritual qualities predominate. Thus, one of the most marked peculiarities of modern language is what might be called their prose organization; i. e. their prosody or metrical system is founded, not on quantity, but on accentuation, so that by this change the chief distinction between *oratio vincula* and *oratio soluta*, as understood by the ancients, is lost; and we may confidently look forward to the time when the fusion of these forms shall be rendered more complete, by the abolition of that "bondage of rhyming" which Milton condemns as "the invention of a barbarous age," and which Ben Johnson characterizes as "wresting words from their true calling." There is no good reason why the relative duration of successive syllables in time should have been insisted upon as essential to poetry; for we might with equal propriety follow the example of Simmas of Rhodes, and establish a canon that the lines should be of such length, and so arranged, that the finished poem would present to the eye the form of a heart, a battle-axe, an egg, a flute, or a phoenix. But the constant tendency in human speech is to shake off these conventional shackles, in proportion as it frees itself from the domain of the senses, and becomes an organ of revelation for the higher reflective faculties. The spiritualizing and enfranchising influence of Christianity transformed Greek into an accentuated language; and Grimm has shown that the same process took place also in German, which originally made quantity or the temporal value of the vowels the basis of its prosocial system.

[To be continued.]

"Crispino" is rehearsing at St. Petersburg's Imperial Opera.